ROOSEVELT TELLS OF SAN JUAN HILL AND THE ROUND ROBIN

GENERAL JOSEPH WHEELER, IN THE FOREGROUND, COMMANDER OF THE LEFT WING OF THE ARMY BEFORE THE SAN JUAN HILLS. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, MAJOR GEORGE M. DUNN, COLONEL BRODIE, CHAPLAIN BROWN, LEONARD WOOD, *and* COLONEL ROOSEVELT.

"RICHARD HARDING DAVIS—WHO WAS WITH US CONTINUALLY AND WHO PERFORMED VALUABLE SERVICE ON THE FIRING LINE."

The Ex-President Gives Inside Facts on a Few Disputed Points in the Cuban Campaign—Experiences of Himself and His Command in Some Inspiring and Some Annoying Situations.

By Theodore Roosevelt.

I HAD not enjoyed the Guasimas fight at all, because I had been so uncertain as to what I ought to do. But the San Juan fight was entirely different. The Spaniards had a hard position to attack, it is true, but we could see them, and I knew exactly how to proceed. I kept on horseback merely because I found it difficult to convey orders along the line, as the men were lying down, and it is always hard to get men to start when they cannot see whether their comrades are also going. So I rode up and down the lines, keeping them straightened out, and gradually worked through line after line until I found myself at the head of the regiment. By the time I had reached the lines of the regulars of the 1st Brigade I had come to the conclusion that it was silly to stay in the valley firing at the hills, because that was really where we were most exposed, and that the thing to do was to try to rush the intrenchments. Where I struck the regulars there was no one of superior rank to mine, and after asking why they did not charge, and being answered that they had no orders, I said I would give the order. There was naturally a little reluctance shown by the elderly officer in command to accept my order, so I said: "Then let my men through, sir," and I marched through, followed by my grinning men. The younger officers and the enlisted men of the regulars jumped up and joined us. I waved my hat, and we went up the hill with a rush. Having taken it, we looked across at the Spaniards in the trenches under the San Juan blockhouse to our left, which Hawkins's brigade was assaulting. I ordered our men to open fire on the Spaniards in the trenches.

Memory plays funny tricks in such a fight, where things happen quickly, and all kinds of mental images succeed one another in a detached kind of way while the work goes on. As I gave the order in question there slipped through my mind Mahan's account of Nelson's orders that each ship as it sailed forward, if it saw another ship engaged with an enemy's ship, should rake the latter as it passed When Hawkins's soldiers captured the blockhouse, I, very much elated, ordered a charge on my own hook to a line of hills still further on. Hardly anybody heard this order, however; only four men started with me, three of whom were shot. I gave one of them, who was only wounded, my canteen of water, and ran back, much irritated that I had not been followed—which was quite unjustifiable, because I found that nobody had heard my orders. General Sumner had come up by this time, and I asked his permission to lead the charge. He ordered me to do so, and this time away we went and stormed the Spanish intrenchments. There was some close fighting, and we took a few prisoners. We also captured the Spanish provisions, and ate them that night with great relish. One of the items was salted flying-fish, by the way. There were also bottles of wine, and jugs of fiery spirit, and as soon as possible I had these broken, although not before one or two of my men had taken too much liquor. Lieutenant Howze, of the regulars, an aide of General Sumner's, brought me an order to halt where I was; he could not make up his mind to return until he had spent an hour or two with us under fire. The Spaniards attempted a counter-attack in the middle of the afternoon, but were driven back without effort, our men laughing and cheering as they rose to fire; because hitherto they had been assaulting breastworks, or lying still under artillery fire, and they were glad to get a chance to shoot at the Spaniards in the open. We lay on our arms that night, and as we were drenched with sweat, and had no blankets save a few we took from the dead Spaniards, we found even the tropic night chilly before morning came.

During the afternoon's fighting, while I was the highest officer at our immediate part of the front, Captains Boughton and Morton, of the regular cavalry, two as fine officers as any man could wish to have beside him in battle, came along the firing line to tell me that they had head a rumor that we might fall back, and that they wished to record their emphatic protest against any such course. I did not believe there was any truth in the rumor, for the Spaniards were utterly incapable of any effective counter-attack. However, late in the evening, after the fight, General Wheeler visited us at the front, and he told me to keep myself in readiness, as at any moment it might be decided to fall back. Jack Greenway was beside me when General Wheeler was speaking. I answered, "Well, general, I really don't know whether we would obey an order to fall back. We can take that city by a rush, and if we have to move out of here at all I should be inclined to make the rush in the right direction." Greenway nodded an eager assent. The old general, after a moment's pause, expressed his hearty agreement, and said that he would see that there was no falling back. He had been very sick for a couple of days, but, sick as he was, he managed to get into the fight. He was a gamecock if ever there was one, but he was in very bad physical shape on the day of the fight. If there had been any one in high command to supervise and press the attack that afternoon, we would have gone right into Santiago. In my part of the line the advance was halted only because we received orders not to move forward, but to stay on the crest of the captured hill and hold it.

EARLY MORNING COURAGE.

We are always told that 3-o'clock-in-the-morning courage is the most desirable kind. Well, my men and the regulars of the cavalry had just that brand of courage. At about 3 o'clock on the morning after the first fight shooting began in our front, and there was an alarm of a Spanish advance. I was never more pleased than to see the way in which the hungry, tired, shabby men all jumped up and ran forward to the hillcrest, so as to be ready for the attack, which, however, did not come. As soon as the sun rose the Spaniards again opened upon us with artillery. A shell burst between Dave Goodrich and myself, blacking us with powder, and killing and wounding several of the men immediately behind us.

Next day the fight turned into a siege; there were some stirring incidents, but for the most part it was trench work. A fortnight later Santiago surrendered. Wood won his brigadier generalship by the capital way in which he handled his brigade in the fight and in the following siege. He was put in command of the captured city, and in a few days I succeeded to the command of the brigade.

The health of the troops was not good, and speedily became very bad. There was some dysentery and a little yellow fever, but most of the trouble was from a severe form of malarial fever. The Washington authorities had behaved better than those in actual command of the expedition at one crisis. Immediately after the first day's fighting around Santiago the latter had hinted by cable to Washington that they might like to withdraw, and Washington had emphatically vetoed the proposal. I record this all the more gladly because there were not too many gleams of good sense shown in the home management of the war; although I wish to repeat that the real blame for this rested primarily with us ourselves, the people of the United States, who had for years pursued in military matters a policy that rendered it certain that there would be inepitude and failure in high places if ever a crisis came. After the siege the people in Washington showed no knowledge whatever of the conditions around Santiago, and proposed to keep the army there. This would have meant that at least three-fourths of the men would either have died or have been permanently invalided, as a virulent form of malaria was widespread and there was a steady growth of dysentery and other complaints. No object of any kind was to be gained by keeping the army in or near the captured city. General Shafter tried his best to get the Washington authorities to order the army home. As he failed to accomplish anything, he called a council of the division and brigade commanders and the chief medical officers to consult over the situation.

SHAFTER'S REQUEST.

Although I had command of a brigade, I was only a colonel, and so I did not intend to attend, but the general informed me that I was particularly wanted, and accordingly I went. At the council General Shafter asked the medical authorities as to conditions, and they united in informing him that they were very bad and were certain to grow much worse, and that in order to avoid frightful ravages from disease, chiefly due to malaria, the army should be sent back at once to some part of the northern United States. The general then explained that he could not get the War Department to understand the situation; that he could not get the attention of the public, and that he felt that there should be some authoritative publication which would make the War Department take action before it was too late to avert the ruin of the army. All who were in the room expressed their agreement.

THE "ROUND ROBIN."

Then the reason for my being present came out. It was explained to me by General Shafter, and by others, that as I was a volunteer officer and intended immediately to return to civil life, I could afford to take risks which the regular army men could not afford to take and ought not to be expected to take, and that therefore I ought to make the publication in question, because to incur the hostility of the War Department would not make any difference to me, whereas it would be destructive to the men in the regular army, or to those who hoped to get into the regular army. I thought this true, and said I would write a letter or make a statement which could then be published. Brigadier General Ames, who was in the same position that I was, also announced that he would make a statement.

When I left the meeting it was understood that I was to make my statement as an interview in the press; but Wood, who was by that time brigadier general commanding the City of Santiago, gave me a quiet hint to put my statement in the form of a letter to General Shafter, and this I accordingly did. When I had written my letter, the correspondent of The Associated Press, who had been informed by others what had occurred, accompanied me to General Shafter. I presented the letter to General Shafter, who waved it away and said: "I don't want to take it; do whatever you wish with it." I, however, insisted on handing it to him, whereupon he shoved it toward the correspondent of The Associated Press, who took hold of it, and I released my hold. General Ames made a statement direct to the correspondent, and also sent a cable to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy at Washington, a copy of which he gave to the correspondent. By this time the other division and brigade commanders who were present felt that they had better take action themselves. They united in a round robin to General Shafter, which General Wood dictated, and which was signed by Generals Kent, Bates, Chaffee, Sumner, Ludlow, Ames and Wood, and by myself. General Wood handed this to General Shafter, and it was made public by General Shafter precisely as mine was made public. Later I was much amused when General Shafter stated that he could not imagine how my letter and the round robin got out! When I saw this statement, I appreciated how wise Wood had been in hinting to me not to act on the suggestion of the general that I should make a statement to the newspapers, but to put my statement in the form of a letter to him as my superior officer, a letter which I delivered to him. Both the letter and the round robin were written at General Shafter's wish and at the unanimous suggestion of all the commanding and medical officers of the Fifth Army Corps, and both were published by General Shafter.

PRIME VIRTUE OF SOLDIER.

In a regiment the prime need is to have fighting men; the prime virtue is to be able and eager to fight with the utmost effectiveness. I have never believed that this was incompatible with other virtues. On the contrary, while there are, of course, exceptions, I believe that on the average the best fighting men are also the best citizens. I do not believe that a finer set of natural soldiers than the men of my regiment could have been found anywhere, and they were first class citizens in civil life also. One fact may perhaps be worthy of note. Whenever we were in camp and so fixed that we could have regular meals we used to have a general officers' mess, over which I, of course, presided. During our entire service there was never a foul or indecent word uttered at the officers' mess—I mean this literally; and there was very little swearing, although now and then in the fighting, if there was a moment when swearing seemed to be the best method of reaching the heart of the matter, it was resorted to.

NATION'S DEBT OF GRATITUDE.

The men I cared for most in the regiment were the men who did the best work; and therefore my liking for them was obliged to take the shape of exposing them to most fatigue and hardship, of demanding from them the greatest service and of making them incur the greatest risk. Once I kept Greenway and Goodrich at work for forty-eight hours, without sleeping and with very little food, fighting and digging trenches. I freely sent the men for whom I cared most to where death might smite them, and death often smote them, as it did the two best officers in my regiment, Allyn Capron and "Bucky" O'Neil. My men would not have respected me had I acted otherwise. Their creed was my creed. The life even of the most useful man, of the best citizen, is not to be hoarded if there be need to spend it. I felt, and feel, this about others, and, of course, also about myself. This is one reason why I have always felt impatient contempt for the effort to abolish the death penalty on account of sympathy with criminals. I am willing to listen to arguments in favor of abolishing the death penalty so far as they are based purely on grounds of public expediency, although these arguments have never convinced me. But inasmuch as, without hesitation, in the performance of duty I have again and again sent good and gallant and upright men to die, it seems to me the height of folly, both mischievous and mawkish, to contend that criminals who have deserved death should nevertheless be allowed to shirk it. No brave and good man can properly shirk death, and no criminal who has earned death should be allowed to shirk it.

One of the best men with our regiment was the British military attaché, Captain Arthur Lee, an old friend. The other military attachés were herded together at headquarters and saw little. Captain Lee, who had known me in Washington, escaped and stayed with the regiment. We grew to feel that he was one of us, and made him an honorary member. There were two other honorary members. One was Richard Harding Davis, who was with us continually and who performed valuable service on the fighting line. The other was a regular officer, Lieutenant Parker, who had a battery of gatlings. We were with this battery throughout the San Juan fighting, and we grew to have the strongest admiration for Parker as a soldier and the strongest liking for him as a man. During our brief campaign we were closely and intimately thrown with various regular officers of the type of Mills, Howze and Parker. We felt not merely fondness for them as officers and gentlemen, but pride in them as Americans. It is a fine thing to feel that we have in the army and in the navy modest, efficient, gallant gentlemen of this type doing such disinterested work for the honor of the flag and of the nation. No American can overpay the debt of gratitude we all of us owe to the officers and enlisted men of the army and of the navy.

DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL.

Of course, with a regiment of our type there was much to learn both among the officers and the men. There were all kinds of funny incidents. One of my men, an ex-cow-puncher and former round-up cook, a very good shot and rider, got into trouble on the way down to the transport. He understood entirely that he had to obey the officers of his own regiment, but, like so many volunteers, or at least like so many volunteers of my regiment, he did not understand that this obligation extended to officers of other regiments. One of the regular officers on the transport ordered him to do something which he declined to do. When the officer told him to consider himself under arrest he responded by offering to fight him for a trifling consideration. He was brought before a court martial, which sentenced him to a year's imprisonment at hard labor, with dishonorable discharge, and the major general commanding the division approved the sentence.

We were on the transport. There was no hard labor to do, and the prison consisted of another cow-puncher, who kept guard over him with his carbine, evidently divided in his feelings as to whether he would like most to shoot him or to let him go. When we landed somebody told the prisoner that I intended to punish him by keeping him with the baggage. He at once came to me in great agitation, saying: "Colonel, they say you're going to leave me with the baggage when the fight is on. Colonel, if you do that I will never show my face in Arizona again. Colonel, if you will let me go to the front I promise I will obey any one you say; any one you say, colonel," with the evident feeling that, after this concession, I could not, as a gentleman, refuse his request. Accordingly, I answered: "Shields, there is no one in this regiment more entitled to be shot than you are, and you shall go to the front." His gratitude was great, and he kept repeating, "I'll never forget this, colonel, never." Nor did he. When we got very hard up he would now and then manage to get hold of some flour and sugar, and would cook a doughnut and bring it around to me, and watch me with a delighted smile as I ate it. He behaved extremely well in both fights, and after the second one I had him formally before me and remitted his sentence—something which, of course, I had not the slightest power to do, although at the time it seemed natural and proper to me.

When we came to be mustered out, the regular officer who was doing the mustering, after all the men had been discharged, finally asked me where the prisoner was. I said, "What prisoner?" He said, "The prisoner, the man who was sentenced to a year's imprisonment with hard labor and dishonorable discharge." I said, "Oh! I pardoned him;" to which he responded, "I beg your pardon; you did what?" This made me grasp the fact that I had exceeded authority, and I could only answer, 'Well, I did pardon him, anyhow, and he has gone with the rest;" whereupon the mustering-out officer sank back in his chair and remarked, "He was sentenced by a court martial, and the sentence was approved by the major general commanding the division. You were a lieutenant colonel, and you pardoned him. Well, it was nervy, that's all I'll say."

The simple fact was that under the circumstances it was necessary for me to enforce discipline and control the regiment, and therefore to reward and punish individuals in whatever way the exigencies demanded. I often explained to the men what the reasons for an order were the first time it was issued, if there was any trouble on their part in understanding what they were required to do. They were very intelligent and very eager to do their duty, and I hardly ever had any difficulty the second time with them. If, however, there was the slightest wilful shirking of duty or insubordination, I punished instantly and mercilessly, and the whole regiment cordially backed me up. To have punished men for faults and shortcomings which they had no opportunity to know were such would have been as unwise as to have permitted any of the occasional bad characters to exercise the slightest license. It was a regiment which was sensitive about its dignity and was very keenly alive to justice and to courtesy, but which cordially approved absence of molly-coddling, insistence upon the performance of duty, and summary punishment of wrongdoing.

WHAT TO DO WITH CAPTIVES.

In the final fighting at San Juan, when we captured one of the trenches, Jack Greenway had seized a Spaniard, and shortly afterward I found Jack leading his captive around with a string. I told him to turn him over to a man who had two or three other captives, so that they should all be taken to the rear. It was the only time I ever saw Jack look aggrieved. "Why, colonel, can't I keep him for myself?" he asked plaintively. I think he had an idea that as a trophy of his bow and spear the Spaniard would make a fine body servant.

One reason that we never had the slightest trouble in the regiment was because, when we got down to hard pan, officers and men shared exactly alike. It is all right to have differences in food and the like in times of peace and plenty, when everybody is comfortable. But in really hard times officers and men must share alike if the best work is to be done. As long as I had nothing but two hardtacks, which was the allowance to each man on the morning after the San Juan fight, no one could complain; but if I had had any private little luxuries the men would very naturally have realized keenly their own shortages.

BEANS AND REQUISITIONS.

Soon after the Guasimas fight we were put on short commons, and as I knew that a good deal of food had been landed and was on the beach at Siboney I marched thirty or forty of the men down to see if I could not get some and bring it up. I finally found a commissary officer, and he asked me what I wanted, and I answered, anything he had. So he told me to look about for myself. I found a number of sacks of beans—I think about eleven hundred pounds—on the beach, and told the officer that I wanted eleven hundred pounds of beans. He produced a book of regulations and showed me the appropriate section and subdivision, which announced that beans were issued only for the officers' mess. This did me no good, and I told him so. He said he was sorry, and I answered that he was not as sorry as I was. I then "studied on it," as Br'er Rabbit would say, and came back with a request for eleven hundred pounds of beans for the officers' mess. He said, "Why, colonel, your officers can't eat eleven hundred pounds of beans," to which I responded, "You don't know what appetites my officers have." He then said he would send the requisition to Washington. I told him I was quite willing, so long as he gave me the beans. He was a good fellow, so we finally effected a working compromise—he got the requisition and I got the beans, although he warned me that the price would probably be deducted from my salary.

Under some regulation or other only the regular supply trains were allowed to act, and we were supposed not to have any horses or mules in the regiment itself. This was very pretty in theory, but, as a matter of fact, the supply trains were not numerous enough. My men had a natural genius for acquiring horseflesh in odd ways, and I continually found that they had staked out in the brush various captured Spanish cavalry horses and Cuban ponies and abandoned commissary mules. Putting these together, I would organize a small pack train and work it industriously for a day or two, until they learned about it at headquarters and confiscated it. Then I would have to wait for a week or so until my men had accumulated some more ponies, horses and mules, the regiment meanwhile living in plenty on what we had got before the train was confiscated.

All of our men were good at accumulating horses, but within our own ranks I think we were inclined to award the palm to our chaplain. There was not a better man in the regiment than the chaplain, and there could not have been a better chaplain for our men. He took care of the sick and wounded, he never spared himself and he did every duty. In addition, he had a natural aptitude for acquiring mules, which made some admirer, when the regiment was disbanded, propose that we should have a special medal struck for him, with, on the obverse, "A Mule passant and Chaplain regardant." After the surrender of Santiago a Philadelphia clergyman whom I knew came down to General Wheeler's headquarters, and after visiting him announced that he intended to call on the Rough Riders, because he knew their colonel. One of General Wheeler's aids, Lieutenant Steele, who liked us both individually and as a regiment, and who appreciated some of our ways, asked the clergyman, after he had announced that he knew Colonel Roosevelt, "But do you know Colonel Roosevelt's regiment?" "No," said the clergyman. "Very well, then, let me give you a piece of advice. When you go down to see the colonel don't let your horse out of your sight; and if the chaplain is there, don't get off the horse!"

THE FIGHTING EDGE.

We came back to Montauk Point and soon after were disbanded. We had been in the service only a little over four months. There are no four months of my life to which I look back with more pride and satisfaction. I believe most earnestly and sincerely in peace, but as things are yet in this world the nation that cannot fight, the people that have lost the fighting edge, that have lost the virile virtues, occupy a position as dangerous as it is ignoble. The future greatness of America in no small degree depends upon the possession by the average American citizen of the qualities which my men showed when they served under me at Santiago.

Moreover, there is one thing in connection with this war which it is well that our people should remember, our people who genuinely love the peace of righteousness, the peace of justice—and I would be ashamed to be other than a lover of the peace of righteousness and of justice. The true preachers of peace, who strive earnestly to bring nearer the day when peace shall obtain among all peoples, and who really do help forward the cause, are men who never hesitate to choose righteous war when it is the only alternative to unrighteous peace. These are the men who, like Dr. Lyman Abbott, have backed every genuine movement for peace in this country and who nevertheless recognized our clear duty to war for the freedom of Cuba.

But there are other men who put peace ahead of righteousness, and who care so little for facts that they treat fantastic declarations for immediate universal arbitration as being valuable, instead of detrimental, to the cause they profess to champion, and who seek to make the United States impotent for international good under the pretence of making us impotent for international evil. All the men of this kind, and all of the organizations they have controlled, since we began our career as a nation, all put together, have not accomplished one-hun-

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